



# SUMMER 2012 COLORADO WILDFIRES NON-PROFIT SECTOR CASE STUDY

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NOVEMBER 2012



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## ***1.0 Introduction***

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2012 will prove to be Colorado's costliest and most destructive year for wildfires. The state was facing one of its worst droughts in history due to an unusually warm and dry winter. Additionally, with millions of acres of bark beetle destruction, the stage was set for an active fire season.

The Lower North Fork Fire, starting on March 26, 2012, took the lives of three residents, burned 4140 acres and destroyed 23 homes. From March 26<sup>th</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup> twelve significant wildfires took the lives of six Colorado residents, burned over 200,000 acres, destroyed 656 homes, and cost the state close to two hundred million dollars.

During the last week in June there were eight active and significant fires raging simultaneously in Colorado including the two most destructive blazes, The High Park Fire and The Waldo Canyon Fire. (Note, as of Oct 25, 2012, several more fires have started destroying 14 more homes and thousands more acres.)

This case study was written to demonstrate the significant role the non-profit sector plays in response, relief and recovery. Successful partnerships with these voluntary agencies can significantly reduce the resources and costs local, state and federal agencies required to take care of thousands of citizens in affected communities. During the summer of 2012, the non-profit sector contributed over 94,000 volunteer hours to aid in response, relief & recovery with a value of over two million dollars in labor. The value of donated supplies, food, clothing, shelter, health & mental health assistance will be in the tens of millions of dollars. These are insurmountable savings for local, state and federal agencies.

*The content of this Case Study represents the best efforts of the author based on the information available at the time of publication, but is not intended to convey formal guidance or policy of the federal government or other participating agencies. The views and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily state or reflect those of their respective organizations or the US Government.*

## ***2.0 Background***

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The Departments of Defense and Homeland Security, in close coordination with the Denver Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI), have partnered to establish the Wide Area Recovery and Resiliency Program (WARRP). The purpose of this collaborative program is to study, develop and demonstrate frameworks, operational capabilities and interagency coordination, enabling a timely return to functionality and re-establishment of socio-economic order and basic services through execution of recovery and resiliency activities, as applicable. This program will explore a coordinated systems approach to the recovery and resiliency of wide urban areas, including meeting public health requirements and restoring all types of critical infrastructure, key resources (both civilian and military) and high traffic areas (transit/transportation facilities) following a chemical, biological or radiological (CBR) incident.

# ***3.0 Colorado Significant Wildfire Timeline & Summary***

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*As relating to Voluntary Agencies Active in Disaster*

## **High Park Fire Starts**

### **June 9 (Saturday)**

The initial report for the High Park Fire came in at 0554 on Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup> the Larimer County Joint Information Center(JIC)/Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was activated around 1340 to support the first of many mandatory

evacuations. Activation of **COVOAD** partners at this time included the **American Red Cross (ARC)** to staff the evacuation center located at Cache La Poudre Middle School, and **United Way of Larimer County 2-1-1 (UWLC 2-1-1)** Colorado to assist with fire related calls, manage volunteer/donation calls, and produce the 'Relief and Recovery' Guide. **ARC** and **2-1-1** Liaisons reported to the EOC to effectively support Larimer County. By 2235 the High Park Fire was reported at 8,000 acres, with 0% containment and six confirmed lost structures. Larimer County made a verbal request for an emergency disaster declaration. In anticipation of a large volume of donation and volunteer offers coming forward, **United Way Larimer County 211** began referring related calls to the [www.helpcoloradonow.org](http://www.helpcoloradonow.org) website. Additionally, **Adventist Community Services LIFT (ACS)** was placed on stand-by in anticipation of a need for donations management.



**High Park Fire**

### **June 10 (Sunday)**

**High Park Fire** -14,000 acres, 0% containment, 18 confirmed damaged/destroyed homes.

0500 Sunday, June 10<sup>th</sup> over 1200 mandatory evacuations ordered. The McKee Building at Ranch and Cache La Poudre Middle School were both established as evacuation centers with **American Red Cross (ARC)** health and mental health services serving both shelters. Additional **COVOAD** members deployed at this time included **The Salvation Army (TSA)** to provide meals and snacks and **COVOAD** provided a Liaison at the EOC to help support Larimer County and the operations of its members. At this stage, members placed on stand-by included the **Colorado Volunteer Center Network (CVCN)** in anticipation of spontaneous unaffiliated volunteers (SUV) and **PetAid** in anticipation providing support to the Larimer County Humane Society and The Ranch for sheltering and care of small and large animals, respectively. Reports of missing persons were coming to the fire information line and **UWLC 2-1-1** which indicated a need to open the '**American Red Cross Safe and Well**' portal. **UWLC 2-1-1** made this request to **ARC** and the portal remained open for the duration of the fire.

**ARC** at Cache La Poudre Middle School reported an inundation of donations arriving at the evacuation site by early afternoon. SUVs were also reported as showing up at the evacuation center later in the day. By 1415, **Adventists Community Services (ACS)** was activated and working in collaboration with **UWLC 2-1-1** and local emergency management to establish a collection and distributions site. A press release requesting citizens to give financial donations and discouraging dropping of donations at the evacuation centers was released referring people to **2-1-1** and [helpcoloradonow.org](http://helpcoloradonow.org). Due to air quality at the evacuation center at Cache La Poudre Middle School, all sheltering and evacuation center operations were transported to the McKee Building at the Ranch late Sunday evening.

### **June 11 (Monday)**

**High Park Fire** - 36,930 acres, 0% containment, and 19 homes destroyed reported at 0800, 100+ homes damaged/destroyed reported at 1840, transitioned to Type I incident team. The State EOC was activated at Level IV to monitor the situation and **COVOAD** was asked to provide a Liaison. State Donation Coordination Team/Volunteer Coordination Team (**DCT/VCT**) and Recovery conference calls began to coordinate activities between local, state, and federal entities. Planning for recovery began between Larimer County Emergency Management, County Manager and Commissioners, and the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA), including collaboration to determine a location for the Disaster Recovery Center (DRC).

### **June 12 (Tuesday)**

**High Park Fire** - 43,433 acres and is listed as 0% contained, 100+ homes confirmed damaged/destroyed. The Governor declared a State Disaster on Tuesday, June 12<sup>th</sup>. **UWLC 2-1-1** reported 1,685 calls and **ACS** met with local authorities that afternoon to discuss donations management and the possibility utilizing a vacant store at the Foothills Fashion Mall. At this stage, **CVCN** was assisting in matching volunteer and donation offers that were made into the AidMatrix tool with agencies that could utilize the offers. **COVOAD** developed a reporting template to capture volunteer hours, meals served, and other voluntary agency services, as well as reached out to member agencies to inquire about services and availability.

### **June 13 (Wednesday)**

**High Park Fire** - 46,600 acres, 10% containment. TSA reported serving 215 meals and 825 snacks- **ARC** housed 7 for night of the 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **June 14 (Thursday)**

**High Park Fire** - 52,000 acres to date and is an estimated 15 to 20 percent contained. Fire jumped highway 14.

### **June 15 (Friday)**

**High Park Fire** - 54,230 acres with 20% containment 112 confirmed structures destroyed. Larimer County opened the High Park Fire Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) at Johnson Hall on the Colorado State University Campus. Many local agencies and State agencies reported to the DRC to assist with recovery efforts. **COVOAD** member **UWLC 2-1-1** invited many of the active non-profits to join the **CDVMN** network to

utilize donation and volunteer offers that had come forward. Boxes and bags of donations being dropped off at the Ranch and an increase in SUVs were being reported, as well as this activity causing **ARC** staff and volunteers to become distracted from their mission. The fire flared up and a large number of pre-evacuations were sent out on triggering **ARC** to reopen the evacuation center at Cache La Poudre Middle School.

### **June 16 (Saturday)**

**High Park Fire** – 55,050 Acres Containment: 45%, 181 homes confirmed damaged and or destroyed. Larimer County approved the **ACS** Donations Collection and Distribution Center site selected at closed Mervyns department store.

### *Springer Fire Starts*

### **June 17 (Sunday)**

**High Park Fire** - 56,480 Acres containment 45%, 181 homes confirmed damaged/destroyed.

**Springer Fire** Starts west of Colorado Springs.

### **June 18 (Monday)**

**High Park Fire** – 58,770 Acres Containment: 50%, 189 structures:

**Springer Fire** grows to 970 acres. State activates to level 3 due to complexity of Springer and High Park. Donations collection center is opened in Ft. Collins for donation drop off.

### **June 19 (Tuesday)**

**High Park Fire** - 59,500 acres with 50% containment.

United Way Larimer County & Colorado 211 Creates High Park Fire Relief & Recovery Guide

**Springer Fire** -1,100 acres.

### **June 20 (Wednesday)**

**High Park Fire** - 65,738 acres with 55% containment.

**Springer Fire** – 1,145 acres.

### **June 21 (Thursday)**

**High Park Fire** - **ARC** Client Services begin individual client assistance. **TSA** reports 3,300 meals and 6,000 drinks served. **2-1-1** reports 3,832 calls: 34% were volunteer offers, 30% were for information on the event, 26% were for in-kind donations, and 10% for financial contributions. Feedback on unmet needs for those affected by event: transportation, motel vouchers and internet services.

**The Southern Baptist** set-up a mobile laundry facilitate at the ranch where people could drop off their laundry to be cleaned/folded.

**Springer Fire** – 1,145 acres

## June 22 (Friday)

**High Park Fire -1200** -68,440 acres with 60% containment, 191 homes-

**2130** - 69,543 Acres 45% Contained

Red flag day- windy fire running seven miles in five hours

**COVOAD** Liaisons are aware of and tracking multiple groups eager to be involved with the response & recovery efforts.

## Weber Fire Starts

**Weber Fire** starts - Southeast Colorado (6 miles S. of Mancos)

**Springer Fire** fully contained.

## June 23 (Saturday)

**High Park Fire** - 75,500 acres Containment: 45%.

**American Red Cross** transitions all sheltering operations to Cache La Poudre; evacuees not staying at the shelter encouraged to go to the Ranch for meals, mental health supports, access to services provided by community partners

## Treasure Fire Starts

**Treasure Fire** starts - 5 miles NE of Leadville no immediate evacuations.

## Waldo Canyon Fire Starts

**1200** - Calls pour in to 911 about a plume of smoke visible throughout the Pikes Peak region. From the east, it appears to rise north of Pikes Peak, above Garden of the Gods. Calls so heavy that officials ask people to stop calling



Waldo Canyon Fire

## Estes Park Fire (Woodland Park) Starts

**1200-1230 Estes Park Woodland Heights Fire** begins – 22 homes burn almost immediately. Resources pulled from High Park fire to fight the Estes Park Fire. **ARC** opens shelter for evacuees. Fire under control by late evening.

1230-1300 - Cedar Heights gated community north of U.S. 24, near Waldo Canyon, is evacuated, and hikers and vehicles are told to get out.

**1300-1600** Fire grows rapidly in all directions, fueled by strong, unpredictable winds in a searing heat. A 150-acres estimate grows to 600 acres by 3 p.m. Residents of Pyramid Mountain Estates in Cascade start packing, shelters open at Cheyenne Mountain and Woodland Park high schools, and the Norris Penrose Equestrian Center opens to take large animals. As flames approach Cedar Heights, officials evacuate the Garden of the Gods park and urge voluntary evacuations of Chipita Park, Green Mountain Falls and Cascade. Voluntary evacuations issued for everyone west of 30th Street from Gateway north to Chuckwagon, which encompasses a portion of Mountain Shadows, including the Flying W Ranch.

**1500-1600** Planes and helicopters drop water and retardant. Mandatory evacuation issued for parts of Cascade, as well as the areas around Mountain Shadows previously under voluntary evacuation. Parts of Rampart Range Road closed campsites evacuated. Confusion about what to call the fire: Pyramid Mountain or Waldo Canyon. About 1630, Waldo Canyon fire becomes official name. Mayor Bach urges residents to stay vigilant, but calm, and says the fire has been declared a federal emergency. Colorado Springs Fire Chief Rich Brown says 23 mph winds are moving the fire northwest away from the city — the best possible direction for firefighters. Fire department spokeswoman Sunny Smaldino says don't expect a quick fight.

**1600-1700** Fire officials call fire "erratic." Off-duty firefighters called in, Air Force Academy airfield becomes staging area for helicopters. Mandatory evacuations include parts of Cascade. New voluntary evacuations include Peregrine, Oakhills, Discovery, Raven Hills, unincorporated Woodmen Valley, Pine Creek estates and Thunderbird estates. Officers go to homes and use loudspeakers to announce mandatory evacuations. Reverse 911 calls go out. About 200 people from Glen Eyrie Conference Center move to Woodmen Valley Chapel.

**1700-1800** Fire moving fast and changing direction. U.S. Forest Service calls it a Type 1 incident, the highest level that signifies its complexity. Fire stats: 300 firefighters, 1,050 homes evacuated, 1,000 acres burned.

**1800-1900** Fire has several heads burning in different directions and is hard to fight; **ARC** opens Cheyenne Mountain High School shelter in coordination with the Colorado Springs **Community Animal Response Team (CART)** and the Medical Reserve Corps of El Paso County (MRCEPC). This collaboration resulted in a fully functioning all- populations shelter accommodating individuals with Access and Functional Needs (AFN) and sheltering for companion animals. Penrose Equestrian Center was established as the large animal shelter and was managed by the El Paso County **CART**. Both companion and large animals were accepted for sheltering at the Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region (HSPPR).

**1900-2000** Woodmen Valley residents report deer, other wildlife running in a panic.

**2100-Midnight** Fire at 2,000 acres. Evacuations begin about 2330 in Manitou Springs, north of U.S. 24, as fire makes an unusual late-night run. Air Force Academy and NORAD firefighters join fight on south side. No cause identified.

## **June 24 (Sunday)**

**High Park Fire** - 82,114 acres burned, Containment: 45%; total homes 248 homes destroyed

**Waldo Canyon Fire**-Fire forces evacuations bringing evacuees to about 7,000. Flames seen from downtown Colorado Springs as trees torch. AFA and Cheyenne Mountain Air Force Station units on lines under mutual aid agreements. About 125 residents at **ARC** shelter at Cheyenne Mountain High School, with rush coming from Manitou Springs. Fire moving south and north. **COVOAD** activated to staff El Paso County EOC. State EOC activated to Level 2.

**0500 - 0900** Cascade, Green Mountain Falls and Chipita Park evacuated. Garden of the Gods and Pikes Peak Highway close.

**0900 - 1100** Type 1 team takes command. The Incident Information System reports high growth potential as day heats up and winds strengthen. One helicopter, with four on order, that can carry 400 gallons of water, two heavy air tankers and two single-engine air tankers join fight. About 3,000 homes evacuated in El Paso County. Focus on protecting structures and preventing spread. Fire within 1/4 mile of structures. Gov. John Hickenlooper visits with Colorado Springs fire chief to discuss situation.

**1100 – 1300** Teller County Sheriff's Office issues pre-evacuation notice for south of Woodland Park and west to Edlowe Road. El Paso County commissioners tap into federal funds and resources. C-130 aircraft to join fight Monday. Flare-ups around Cedar Heights, fears fire might jump nearby ridge. Noon message from Colorado Springs officials: "The Waldo Canyon fire has changed course and is presently threatening the Cedar Heights area."

**1300-1500** Reports of flames approaching U.S. 24 from the north in Cascade. **ARC** Shelter in Teller County moves to Summit Middle School in Divide because of fears Woodland Park might evacuate. As 1500 approaches, firefighters say winds are shifting. Community support builds, as people offer homes and donations of cash, food, clothing and other items for firefighters and evacuees. Businesses provide discounts and freebies. The city and county issue joint disaster declarations, paving way for federal and state assistance.

**1500-1700** Mandatory evacuations in Farish and Carroll Lake areas. More parks close. Sheriff Maketa says fire is "probably the greatest natural threat we have ever seen in this community in the past 30 to 40 years." Fire growing in three directions: northeast toward Cedar Heights, southwest toward U.S. 24 and northwest toward Cascade and Green Mountain Falls. About 11,000 people evacuated, those who refuse to leave "documented," Maketa says. Nearly \$300 million in property threatened. Stats: 2,500 acres, 450 firefighters, three heavy tankers, four single-engine air tankers, two helicopters.

**1700-1900** Type 1 incident team takes command. Black Hills Energy shuts gas to Cascade.

**2000-2200** Mandatory evacuations lifted for Manitou, but remains for Crystal Park. U.S. Forest Service says firefighters "working diligently" to contain and suppress the now 3,600-acre fire. No containment. "Fire personnel focusing on infrastructure protection and containing the fire on the north side of Highway 24." At evacuation peak this day, more than 13,542 residences, including 120 commercial properties, were threatened, but no structures lost.

**Estes Park Woodland Heights Fire** in final mop up phase. 22 homes destroyed.

## **June 25 (Monday)**

**High Park Fire** - 83,205 acres with 45 percent containment. 248 homes.

**Southern Baptists** begin registering homeowners, on Monday at The Ranch, who will be needing assistance with clean up.

**Open ARC Shelters**

Cheyenne Mountain High School  
1200 Cresta Road Colorado  
Springs  
Summit Elementary School Divide.  
TSA fixed feeding.

**American Red Cross** Safe & Well website activated for Evacuees to register themselves as safe- [www.redcross.org/safeandwell](http://www.redcross.org/safeandwell). Information on sheltering companion animals at multiple locations is distributed.

**Large Animal Evacuation Center** at the Penrose Equestrian Center –

1045 W. Rio Grande St., Colorado Springs

**Small Animal Evacuation Center** at Norris Penrose Event Center – 1045 Lower Gold Camp Rd, Colorado Springs

**City of Colorado Springs CART (Community Animal Response Team) Shelter**

1200 Cresta, Colorado Springs, CO

**Compassion Shelters**

Set up a portable air-conditioned Shelter at Cheyenne Mountain High School in conjunction with the City of Colorado Springs **CART**. Capacity: 50 animals

Rocky Mountain Health Care Services

Dogs, cats, small caged pets (companion animals). This facility can accommodate animals and their people in private rooms with cots.

Capacity: 50 animals

North Academy Veterinary Hospital Located at N. Academy & Vickers. Accommodating dogs and cats. Capacity: 10-12 animals

**Weber Fire**- Montezuma County (Weber Fire) Declaration of Emergency – June 25, 2012.

**Waldo Canyon Fire-‘Things starting to cook up’**

**1200-0900** Fire line at Cedar Heights held overnight, but fire crossed Rampart Range Road and got into Queen’s Canyon. Fire officials are worried: National Weather Service predicts hot, dry weather for the week, with temperatures reaching 100 degrees Monday and Tuesday and winds up to 30 mph. Colorado Springs Fire Department says “offensive ops” beginning. About 6,000 people remain under evacuation, smoke is health risk. Infrared imaging overnight downsizes fire slightly to 3,446 acres.

**0900-1100** Incident Information System reports fire fueled by Western long needle pine and short-needle conifers “with heavy dead load” and Gambel oak. “The fast rate of spread influenced with steep topography, dry fuels, southern exposure that is even drier, with up to 30-foot flame lengths,” report says. Fire spits embers up to 1/4 mile, igniting trees outside fire lines. Helicopters continue air assaults. Flames erupt behind a home in Cedar Heights, but no structure burns. Local economist says region could lose “millions” a day from lost business.

**1100-1300** Most gas stations in Woodland Park run out of fuel as people prepare for possible evacuation. Air Force Academy closes trails leading west, including popular Blodgett trail. Fire crew at the Flying W Ranch punches through the fire line and calls for hand crews — a big offensive move. Two C-130s with the 302nd Airlift Wing prepare to drop retardant.

**1300-1500** New Incident Information System report says fire could grow up to 5,000 acres, with an alarming forecast: Stats: 3,446 acres, eight crews, 17 engines, 6 helicopters, 450 people and two C-130s. Crews in Waldo Canyon report temperatures rising, extreme fire conditions. “Things are starting to cook up deep in the bowls and drainages,” one firefighter says. Efforts concentrated to keep fire north of U.S. 24, improving line around Cascade, and structure protection in Cedar Heights.

**1500-1700** Fire is 5 percent contained with minimal growth. About 3,055 people under evacuation orders. Jerri Marr, forest supervisor for

the Pike and San Isabel National forests, says fire is top priority in the U.S., based on complexity, movement in multiple directions, shifting winds and proximity to homes. Forest Service cost to date to fight fire around \$750,000. Mayor Bach expects high local costs because of overtime for police and firefighters. El Paso County Sheriff's Office establishes tip line for fire investigation. Bach appears on CNN and says Colorado Springs is safe and open for business.

**1900-2100** Two community meetings — one at Colorado Springs shelter, the other in Divide — draw 750 evacuees and others. Fire at 4,000 to 4,500 acres, and it's moved into Wellington Gulch. Discussion of reopening U.S. 24.

**2100-midnight:** New report from Joint Information Center: 4,500 acres, 5 percent containment, 4,825 people (2,599 homes) evacuated, and 600 people fighting the fire. "The fire made a significant run today toward

Palmer Reservoir and became established across Rampart Range Road." Estimated containment: July 16. Plan for Tuesday is to keep fire south of Rampart Range Road and out of Queens Canyon, using Hotshot crews and aircraft. Spot fires visible from downtown appear to grow on north end. The fire is 1/4 mile from U.S. 24, and no cause established because investigators can't reach the probable point of origin. Woodland Park On pre-evacuation notice as a precaution (be prepared and follow local news).

#### Donations/Volunteers

Pikes Peak ARC [www.pparc.org](http://www.pparc.org) accepting financial donations only; also registering volunteers. **Care and Share** collecting Food and non-perishables, M-F, 7 am - 6 pm. **Goodwill** distributing donations to evacuees as needed Messaging – "Please DO NOT bring any donations directly to shelters or the incident command post. They cannot handle donations or distribution of them."

**The area Salvation Army** activated to provide fixed & mobile feeding to shelters and incident command posts. **2-1-1** activated. **Pikes Peak United Way 211** Non-Emergency Assistance and Service Referrals.

### June 26 (Thursday)

#### ***Flagstaff Fire (Boulder Foothills) starts:***

The fire was first reported on June 26 after a lightning storm moved through the area. Twenty-eight homes were evacuated along Bison Drive and Flagstaff Road, but no structures were ever threatened.

**ARC** Shelter is established at East Boulder Rec Center (5660 Sioux Dr., Boulder).

**High Park Fire** -87,250 acres with 55 percent containment 257 homes destroyed.

#### **Waldo Canyon Fire DAY 4-'Expect extreme fire behavior'**

**12:01-0700** Scanner traffic indicates a cabin burned at Eagle Lake Camp, the first structure lost. About 3 a.m., the fire roars to full fury in Queens Canyon, huge flames visible from downtown. Colorado State Patrol says fire not threatening to jump Highway 24 at Cascade, but a Colorado Springs fire official says outlook for Cascade is poor. "It's not a good area with the canyon there," she says. "That could turn into a chimney."

**0700-0900** Fire has grown to 5,168 acres, 5 percent containment. Incident commander Harvey stresses that controlling the U.S. 24 corridor and Rampart Range Road are critical. Fire “slopped over” Rampart Range Road overnight, consuming about 200 acres, and “top priority today” is to rein in hot spot because safety of large foothills neighborhoods — Cedar Heights, Mountain Shadows, Rockrimmon, Peregrine and Air Force Academy — is “contingent on holding Rampart Ridge.” He says the fire hasn’t really gotten into Queen’s Canyon, but did move into the Rampart Reservoir area. “We expect extreme fire behavior.”

**0900-1200** Evacuees from Mountain Shadows allowed back for a 30-minute visit under police escort, but about 1130, the visits end due to erratic fire behavior. Flames shooting up 200 feet reported near Cedar Heights, 200 yards from houses. Brush trucks converge on scene, but lines hold. Incident commander orders immediate end to evacuees sneaking into Cedar Heights to collect personal belongings. Scanner traffic from north side: “fire is pushing Queens Canyon pretty hard.” A crewmember confirms: “It appears to be coming over the ridge.” But a spotter responds: “The fire is doing what it’s done every day. Coming right up to the ridge and not over it.” Air quality deteriorates; people with health conditions urged to stay indoors.

**1200-1400** Fire information officer Greg Heule gives grim prognosis for afternoon: “The entire perimeter of this fire is a concern.” He mentions Cascade/UtePass, Cedar Heights and Rampart Range Reservoir. Pre-evacuation notices spread: a portion of Woodland Park, north Mountain Shadows and Peregrine.

**1600-1700** During a 1600 news conference, incident commander Harvey notes concern about fire in Queen’s Canyon. He declines to estimate size: “If I told you an acreage right now, it would be wrong in about 10 minutes. It’s getting bigger.” In middle of briefing, Bach steps to podium to announce mandatory evacuation for the remainder of Mountain Shadows and Peregrine. At approximately 1630, flames erupt on face of mountain near Mountain Shadows; the air fills with thick smoke, obscuring the Front Range. “OH DEAR GOD.... this is terrifying,” someone posts on Twitter.

**1700-1800** First reports of structures burning, ash falling miles to the east at Stetson Hills Boulevard and Marksheffel Road.

**1800-1900** Roads in northwest Colorado Springs are clogged with people trying to evacuate; scanner reports major destruction. “Multiple structures are on fire on Flying W Ranch Road.” One firefighter reports at least 20 structures burned; another reports 10. Reports of spotty cell phone service, public safety officials ask

**Open American Red Cross Shelters**  
Lewis Palmer High School (1300 Higby, Monument, CO)  
Cheyenne Mountain High School (1200 Cresta Road, Colorado Springs, CO)  
Southeast YMCA (2190 Jet Wing Drive, Colorado Springs, CO)  
Summit Elementary School, Divide, CO  
Cripple Creek/Victor High School  
Cripple Creek, CO 80813

**Donations/Volunteers**  
Physical donations accepted at all **Goodwill** outlets throughout Colorado Springs.  
**Colorado Care & Share** set up to accept food & water donations at their warehouse.  
No spontaneous or unaffiliated volunteer reception center set up at this time.  
[HelpColoradonow.org](http://HelpColoradonow.org) is the website messaged for all donation and volunteer offers.

people to use phones for emergency calls only. More mandatory evacuations ordered: Rockrimmon, Woodmen Valley, Pinon Valley and Pine Cliff.

Residents of Mount St. Francis Nursing Home among the evacuees. Springs Utilities shuts off gas and electricity west of Centennial between Flying W and 30th St. Two main housing areas at AFA placed under pre-evacuation notice. Academy grounds choked with smoke and visibility is low.

**1900-2000** Southbound I-25 at Interquest closes to accommodate evacuation. Traffic on Rockrimmon at a standstill, with all four lanes carrying eastbound traffic. Homes in Mountain Shadows burn: "We have structure-to-structure ignition," one firefighter says.

**2000-2100** Firefighter says homes will burn "like this all night unless we get some more resources." Flying W Ranch reports its buildings burned to the ground. Fire officials blame the sudden eruption of flames on 65 mph winds that drove flames past containment lines. Colorado Springs Fire Chief Rich Brown calls it a "firestorm of epic proportions." Scanner filled with comments from firefighters pledging to stay and save what they can. But they must bypass burning homes to get to those that can be saved. "We're making stands, we're saving many homes," Brown says. Fort Carson opens to house evacuees from Pine Valley and Douglass Valley Housing areas on the AFA. About 100 Springs police officers on the ground, assisting, Chief Pete Carey says. Mandatory evacuations expand to include all areas west and north of Garden of the Gods and I-25. Number of people evacuated: 32,000.

**2100-2200** Fire Chief Brown won't release estimates of the number of structures burned until firefighters assess losses. Urging calm, Maketa says fire commanders trying to assemble additional resources safely and effectively. Evacuation order issued for Kissing Camels. Gov. Hickenlooper flies over stricken area. "It's like looking at the worst movie set you can imagine. There were people's homes burned to the ground. It's almost surreal".

**2200-midnight:** Media staging area near Coronado High School moves because it's in evacuation area. Southbound I-25 reopens, but exits onto westbound roads in evacuation areas blocked. Portion of Holland Park added to mandatory evacuations, making most of area north of Fillmore and west of I-25 a ghost town. Stats: 6,200 acres, 5 percent contained, 20,085 residences and 160 commercial structures threatened, more than 750 firefighters.

## June 27 (Wednesday)

**High Park Fire** - 87,284 acres, Containment 75 percent, 257 homes  
**Waldo Canyon Fire** Day 5-'Entire blocks gone'

### Animal Evacuation Centers

Large Animal Evacuation Center at the Penrose Equestrian Center – 1045 W. Rio Grande St., Colorado Springs

Small Animal Evacuation Center at Norris Penrose Event Center – 1045 Lower Gold Camp Rd, Colorado Springs

Lewis Palmer High School -1300 Higby Rd. Monument, CO  
City of Colorado Springs CART (Community Animal Response Team) Shelter -

1200 Cresta, Colorado Springs, CO  
Compassion Shelters

Set up a portable air-conditioned Shelter at Cheyenne Mountain High School in conjunction with the City of Colorado Springs CART.

Capacity: 50 animals

Rocky Mountain Health Care Services - 310 S. 14th Street, Colorado Springs, CO

Dogs, cats, small caged pets (companion animals). This facility can accommodate animals and their people in private rooms with cots.

Capacity: 50 animals

**1200-0600** Colorado Springs Utilities reports facilities not burned, city's water supply safe to drink. Sheriff Maketa says fire "very active" west of Centennial from Flying W Ranch to just past Vindicator, but security is tight in evacuated areas. All Colorado Springs hotels and many in Denver booked.

**0800-0900** Pre-evacuation notice for Douglas County from South County Line Road to Noe Road, and Spruce Mountain Road to Rampart Range Road. Douglas County Fairgrounds open to evacuees and large animals. Springs Fire Chief Brown says he doesn't know how many homes were lost. Fire at 15,324 acres, another 200 firefighters brought in Tuesday night; no reports of injuries or people missing, 5 percent containment. El Paso County Public Health warns of unhealthy air quality. Memorial Health Systems reports treating 20 patients for respiratory illnesses in 24 hours. An official tells The Gazette more than 100 homes destroyed.

**1100-1200** D-11 reports Chipeta and Trailblazer elementary school standing despite smoke damage.

**1200-1300** AFA superintendent Lt. Gen. Mike Gould says, "We're facing a potentially devastating disaster right here," with flames 10 acres onto academy grounds and a quarter mile from structures. "We evacuated 26,000 people yesterday with no accidents," Mayor Bach said at a City Council meeting. Status of those in Mountain Shadows who refused to evacuate unknown. Bach reports Flying W Ranch is "scorched."

**1300-1500** Fort Carson provides equipment and 18 soldiers. President Obama to survey damage and thank responders on Friday. Firefighters ask for help as Blodgett Peak burns. "As of right now I cannot hold this hill," a firefighter says over the scanner. Three C-130s drop 27,000 gallons of retardant. High demand for information leads to [springsgov.com](http://springsgov.com) crashing.

**1430-1445** Officials say no reports of break-ins, a tight watch kept on evacuated houses. Pre-evacuation issued for the remainder of Woodland Park and all areas east of CR 25 to Blossom Road. Briefing update: city

assessing home losses; embers causing spot fires; weather conditions improved with cloud cover and higher humidity, but winds remain an issue. Incident commander Harvey says fire is unique. "I've been doing this for a long time, and I've never seen a (fire) progression map look like that." Vandenberg Hot Shots ordered into fight.

**1700-1900** Local officials describe destruction as war zone. "Entire blocks — gone," said El Paso County Commissioner Chairwoman Amy Lathen. Incident report: 15,517 acres, 20,085 residences and 160 commercial structures threatened, 32,000 evacuated. Firefighters told in briefings that 200-300 homes lost. 90th Pikes Peak International Hill Climb, scheduled for Sunday, July 8, postponed. Pikes Peak Arts Fest is canceled.

**1900-2100** El Paso County sets up temporary locations to provide food assistance services. **Care and Share** opens pantries to evacuees. AFA moves some cadets off campus and suspends airmanship programs. EOC Support Services: **ARC** sheltered approximately 140 people in three shelters. No pending needs for support. **2-1-1 call center** had handled over 8000 calls, but they have the staff they need to continue supporting this incident. The City EOC requests support for feeding operations for responders and requests **Southern Baptists** be activated.

## **June 28 (Thursday)**

**High Park Fire** - 87,284 acres, 85 percent containment.

*FEMA issued a Presidential Disaster Declaration for areas in Colorado.*

### **Waldo Canyon Fire Day 6**

**0600-0900** Morning briefing: Mayor Bach announces, "hundreds of homes have been destroyed" but provided no specifics.

**0900-1100** Colorado Springs officials make plans to tell residents about losses. Businesses in Woodland Park shut down after evacuated residents leave the area. Standing room only at Woodland Park community meeting.

**1200-1600** Flying W Ranch reports no cattle lost; animals rounded up and taken to Norris Penrose Equestrian Center. Colorado Army National Guard brings in Black Hawk helicopter.

**1500-1800** Colorado Springs officials announce 346 homes destroyed in Mountain Shadows and Flying W Ranch subdivisions. Private evening meetings with residents of 34 streets set. Colorado Springs Deputy Fire Chief Tommy Smith says a small number of people are still unaccounted.

**1800-2000** Mandatory evacuations lifted as of 8 p.m. for Kissing Camels, Holland Park, the southern portion of Rockrimmon, Pine Cliff, Pleasant Valley and an apartment complex at Garden of the Gods Road and 30th Street. Garden of the Gods Road will reopen to 30th Street. El Paso County Sheriff's Office clarifies that cause of fire is unknown following ABC News report that took a hypothetical remark and suggested that the fire was an act of domestic terrorism.

Stats: 16,750 acres (slight decrease from estimates), 15 percent containment, 1,118 personnel. Officials say significant progress made.

**2240** Springs Police Chief Pete Carey announces the remains of one person found in the ruins of a house at 2910 Rossmere Street in Mountain Shadows. A second person from that address remains unaccounted for.

## **June 29 (Friday)**

**High Park Fire** - 87,284 acres, projected containment date of July 1<sup>st</sup>: All Pre-Evacuation Notices Lifted for High Park Fire.

### **Waldo Canyon Fire Day 7 President surveys damage**

**1200-0600** Evacuations at the academy lifted as of 5 a.m., and operations normal. El Paso County officials announced opening Saturday of Disaster Recovery Center at the Department of Human Services, 105 N. Spruce St.

**0900-1200** Pre-evacuation warnings for Douglas County canceled; Commerce Center Drive from East Woodmen to Pine Creek Drive reopens. Normal mail delivery resumes in areas where evacuations lifted. Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region granted permission to rescue pets left behind in some evacuated areas — more than 70 rescued after Wednesday night.

**1200-1500** President Obama arrives at Peterson Air Force Base to tour devastated neighborhoods and meet with firefighters and evacuees. He spoke with firefighters working in Mountain Shadows and made remarks at the Colorado Springs Fire Department camp at Fire Station No. 9 on Garden of the Gods Road.

"We can provide all of the resources, but what we can't do is supply them with the courage ... The folks involved in this are genuine heroes. I hope you're reminded by how important our fire departments and our forest services are," Obama said. The president's last stop was at evacuee center at Southeast YMCA.

**1500-1800** Chief Carey says the remains of a second person have been found at the Rossmere Street house, bringing the fire's death toll to two. Containment increases to 25 percent; no increase in fire size; firefighting cost at \$6.2 million; Mandatory evacuations lifted for Cedar Heights beginning at 9 p.m. and at 8 p.m. for: Glen Eyrie, streets east of 30th Street and north of Garden of the Gods Road, streets east of Centennial Boulevard with a couple of exceptions, south Rockrimmon, north Rockrimmon, unincorporated Woodmen Valley. Several residents returning to Pinon Valley found homes looted and ransacked.

## **June 30 (Saturday)**

**High Park Fire** - Homes lost 259 and 77 out buildings; 87,284 ACRES 100% Contained

### **Open Red Cross Shelters**

Lewis Palmer High School (1300 Higby, Monument, CO)  
Cheyenne Mountain High School (1200 Cresta Road, Colorado Springs, CO)  
Southeast YMCA (2190 Jet Wing Drive, Colorado Springs, CO)  
Summit Elementary School, Divide, CO

### **Waldo Canyon Fire DAY 8- A shift toward recovery**

El Paso County opens Disaster Recovery Center at old DHS office building. The county set up the center within 30 hours of hearing the idea from the state **Division of Local Affairs**. El Paso County official says more than 400 people served in first day of Disaster Recovery Center. Containment at 30 percent; firefighters brace for return of hotter weather; 1,300 firefighters on scene; burn off of interior island continues.

**1000-1200** Colorado Springs police confirm 22 burglaries or attempted burglaries in evacuated zones. One arrest made. Community continues to pitch in with fundraisers, giveaways and other assistance.

**1600-1800** Chief Carey says all missing persons have been accounted for. Containment at 45 percent. Firefighting cost at \$8.8 million. Mandatory evacuations in Teller County lifted.

## July 1 (Sunday)

**Waldo Canyon Fire Day 9** - Structures lost 346 Size: 17,659 acres 45% Percent Contained:  
Estimated Containment date: 7/16/12

**Update:** Progress on all flanks in containing the Waldo Canyon fire.

Firefighters continued to burn interior islands of unburned fuels, resulting in smoke visible to Colorado Springs residents. Mountain Shadows residents allowed to visit their homes. Highway 24 opened to residents of Cascade, Green Mtn. Falls, Chipita Park and Crystola. The highway will be open to all motorists at 1:00 pm.

## July 2 (Monday)

**Waldo Canyon Fire Day 10** - Structures lost 346 Size: 17,827 acres  
Percent Contained: 55% Injuries to Date: 3  
Helicopters: 5 Type 1, 3 Type 2 and 3 Type 3. Structures threatened: 10,000 residences and 100 commercial structures Firefighters continued to make progress on the Waldo Canyon fire overnight. Higher humidity's and cooler temperatures helped crews to further secure the perimeter. The main focus for crews to continue to secure the north perimeter of the fire along West Monument Creek. Aircraft will be used to monitor inaccessible areas north of Devil's Kitchen. Firefighters will patrol areas along Highway 24 and the southeast perimeter of the fire to put out any hot spots. Aircraft will be used to suppress any fire activity in Williams Creek. Resources will hold and improve fire line on the northeast perimeter of the fire on the Air Force Academy.

### Open Red Cross Shelters

Lewis Palmer High School (1300 Higby, Monument, CO)  
Cheyenne Mountain High School (1200 Cresta Road, Colorado Springs, CO)  
Southeast YMCA (2190 Jet Wing Drive, Colorado Springs, CO)  
Summit Elementary School, Divide, CO

## July 3 (Tuesday)

**High Park Fire** Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG) holds first meeting:

**Waldo Canyon Fire Day 11** - Structures lost 346 Structures damaged 25 Size: 18,247 acres Percent Contained: 80% Injuries to Date: 5

### Open Red Cross Shelters

Lewis Palmer High School (1300 Higby, Monument, CO)  
Cheyenne Mountain High School (1200 Cresta Road, Colorado Springs, CO)  
Southeast YMCA (2190 Jet Wing Drive, Colorado Springs, CO)  
Summit Elementary School, Divide, CO

Firefighters performed a lot of mop-up work. Secretary of Homeland Security, Janet Napolitano, and Secretary of Agriculture, Tom Vilsack, visited the fire area and were provided a briefing on the fire by Incident Commander, Rich Harvey. Secretary Vilsack urged citizens to purchase flood insurance, as there is a 30-day waiting period before the insurance is activated. Most evacuations have been lifted with the exception of some residents in the damaged Mountain Shadows subdivision.

## July 4 (Wednesday)

**Waldo Canyon Fire Day 12-** Structures lost 346 Size: 18,247 acres 90% Percent Contained: Five (5) Injuries to date.

Firefighters were welcomed back to fire camp tonight by several hundred members of the Colorado Springs community, who cheered and waved signs at the entrance to thank them for their efforts in suppressing the Waldo Canyon Fire and to celebrate Independence Day. Replacement of damaged power poles on the western perimeter of the fire has begun. No perimeter growth is expected on the fire. Wetting rains are expected over the fire area by Friday. Rain will bring the threat of flash flooding. With the increased containment and expected wet weather, a large number of fire resources have been released for assignments on other fires burning in the nation.

### **July 6 (Thursday)**

The Larimer County **High Park Fire** Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) closes.

### **July 10 (Tuesday)**

#### **Waldo Canyon Fire 100% Contained**

The Waldo Canyon Fire will be called 100% contained today Tuesday, July 10, 2012 at 8:00 p.m. Incident Commander Troy Nelsen flew the fire around 6:00 p.m. and could not find any smokes in the Blodgett Peak area. Blodgett Peak area was the only area of concern and with no smokes showing in that area for 36 hours the team declared the fire 100% contained.

### **July 16 (Monday)**

El Paso County DRC moves locations to new Human Services building at Garden of the Gods.

## 4.0 Statistics

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### Little Sand Fire (Archuleta County, CO)

- Date started: May 13, 2012 Lightning
- Acreage burned: 24,900
- Contained: 7/27/12
- Homes destroyed: 0
- Containment: 100%
- Structures: 0
- Deaths: 0
- Total cost: \$7.5 million

### High Park Fire (Ft. Collins, CO)

- Date started: June 9, 2012 Lightning
- Acreage burned: 87,284
- Contained: June 30, 2012
- Homes destroyed: 259
- Containment: 100%
- Structures: 371
- Deaths: 1
- Total cost: \$39.2 million

### Waldo Canyon Fire (El Paso County, CO)

- Date started: June 23, 2012 Arson
- Acreage burned: 18,247
- Contained: July 10, 2012
- Homes destroyed: 347
- Containment: 100%
- Structures: 347
- Deaths: 2
- Total cost: \$125 million+

### Weber Fire (Montezuma County, CO)

- Date started: June 22, 2012 Human caused
- Acreage burned: 10,133
- Contained: July 6, 2012
- Homes destroyed: 0
- Containment: 100%
- Structures: 1
- Deaths: 0

- Total cost: \$5.8 million

### *Treasure Fire (Leadville, CO)*

- Date started: June 23, 2012 Human caused
- Acreage burned: 420
- Contained:
- Homes destroyed: 0
- Containment: 100%
- Structures: 0
- Firefighters: 118
- Deaths: 0
- Total cost: \$515,000

### *Last Chance Fire (Washington, County, CO)*

- Date started: June 25, 2012 by car tire blowout igniting roadside grass
- Acreage burned: 45,000
- Containment Date: June 26, 2012
- Structures: 4 homes 7 outbuildings
- Deaths: 0
- Total Cost: \$10,000

### *Estes Park Woodland Heights Fire (Larimer County, CO)*

- Date Started: June 26, 2012 by wind knocking power line onto cabin.
- Acreage burned: 27
- Containment Date: June 26, 2012
- Destroyed: 22 homes & 2 outbuildings
- Deaths: 0
- Total Cost: \$250,000 to \$300,000

### *Flagstaff Fire (Boulder, CO)*

- Date Started: June 26, 2012 Lightening
- Acreage burned: 300
- Structures: 28 homes threatened. Zero damaged
- Containment Date: July 4, 2012
- Total Cost: \$2.8 Million

### *Pine Ridge Fire (Grand Junction, CO)*

- Date started: June 27, 2012 Lightning
- Acreage burned: 13,920
- Contained: July 4, 2012
- Homes destroyed: 0
- Containment: 100%
- Structures: 3

- Firefighters: 213
- Deaths: 0
- Total cost: \$3.2 million

Insurance Damage Estimates from the Waldo Canyon & High Park Fires Total Nearly \$450 Million—Making the Devastating 2012 Wildfire Season the Most Expensive in Colorado History.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> **July 17, 2012** – The 2012 Wildfire Season has taken a devastating toll on Colorado residents, burning more than 600 homes and personal property. Insurance adjusters are still inspecting properties and working with residents, and while the claims and rebuilding process continues, preliminary damage estimates now total \$449.7 million from insurance claims that include smoke damage, additional living expenses, damaged and destroyed homes, as well as personal belongings and vehicles. The estimated insured losses make the Waldo Canyon Fire in Colorado Springs Colorado's most expensive wildfire with insurance costs totaling more than \$352.6 million from approximately 4,300 claims filed so far. Officials put the number of homes destroyed at 346. The High Park Fire near Fort Collins burned 259 homes and based on the nearly 850 insurance claims filed so far the insurance costs are estimated at \$97.1 million. These estimates do not include commercial losses. *Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association is a non-profit consumer information organization. Affiliated with the Insurance Information Institute, RMIIA has been serving consumers and the media since 1952.* expenses, damaged and destroyed homes, as well as personal belongings and vehicles. The estimated insured losses make the Waldo Canyon Fire in Colorado Springs Colorado's most expensive wildfire with insurance costs totaling more than \$352.6 million from approximately 4,300 claims filed so far. Officials put the number of homes destroyed at 346. The High Park Fire near Fort Collins burned 259 homes and based on the nearly 850 insurance claims filed so far the insurance costs are estimated at \$97.1 million. These estimates do not include commercial losses. *Rocky Mountain Insurance Information Association is a non-profit consumer information organization. Affiliated with the Insurance Information Institute, RMIIA has been serving consumers and the media since 1952.*

## 5.0 Observations

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### Strengths

There are numerous strengths to recognize throughout the response and recovery phases of the summer wildfire season.

- Great relationships previously established by voluntary agencies and the offices of emergency management.
- Voluntary agencies directly responsible for response activities were immediately engaged as the affected counties ramped up their efforts. There was a more visible relationship benefit in Larimer County than in El Paso County.
- The County EOC's activated VOAD liaisons to help monitor response and relief activities.
- The voluntary agencies had resources they could access beyond the boundaries of the state. The VOAD liaisons greatly assisted in moving requests through the ICS structure.
  - The VOAD liaisons took a huge amount of responsibility off of the ESF6 section chiefs staffing the EOC's.
  - The state activated an EOC COVOAD liaison when its EOC operations ramped up.
- Local and state governments quickly initiated their recovery planning.
- The State Recovery & Mitigation Task Force was activated on June 11, 2012 about five days following the start of the first major wildfire.
  - The task force established daily conference calls to give participants daily updates as well as work on strategies and solutions for the potential losses from the destructive wildfires.
  - The recovery calls were ramped up as each additional fire started and more property was destroyed.
  - The VOAD's were engaged in the daily calls providing current updates of their activity as well as their planning efforts.
- HelpColoradoNow.org was activated immediately after the High Park Fire began. HelpColoradoNow.org is a partnership between Colorado Division of Emergency Management and COVOAD. This initiative brings together government agencies and non-profit organizations so they may better assist communities affected by disaster.
- The DCT/VCT (Donation Coordination Team/Volunteer Coordination Team) who are members of COVOAD monitored the website. This website provided information to the public concerning donations and volunteer management
  - HelpColoradoNow.org website was extremely effective directing the public towards donation opportunities.
  - HelpColoradoNow.org was also linked to AidMatrix, the national donations management system, allowing donation offers and donation requests to be matched accordingly through an automated push/pull system. This tool greatly reduced unsolicited donations showing up at random locations. The website link was pushed by the Public information officers (PIO's) and the media and proved to be extremely helpful in reducing the amount of man hours

required to manage donations. Unaffiliated volunteers were also managed through the HelpColoradoNow.org website.

- With the assistance of the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Larimer County & El Paso County both set up Disaster Recovery Centers (DRC's) within a week of confirmed destruction from each major fire.
  - The DRC's were extremely helpful assisting hundreds of households and individuals. Both DRC's were models for communities who may be affected by disasters in the future.

## ***Weaknesses***

- A lack of manpower to handle the overwhelming demands of both the recovery.
  - The COVOAD volunteer pool (liaisons, allocators, administrators, web-site mgmt., etc.) was very small due to the fact that all of the primary responsibilities of the VOAD members were with the organization they represented.
  - Only a handful of trained COVOAD volunteers able to respond to the disasters without conflicting obligations.
  - Multiple voluntary agencies responding to disaster without previously working with local VOADs. This was the first occasion that many of these non-profits had ever been involved in a disaster.
- Long term unmet needs, beyond the emergency response or early recovery phases (Volunteer & Donations Management), is often outside the current scope of plans.
- Some local governments have not yet recognized or understanding the strengths, capacities and roles the VOAD's play in response and recovery.

## ***Opportunities***

- Rebuilding local VOADs and increasing membership to include all of the spontaneous non-profits that carried out their normal humanitarian charter to including those affected by the disasters.
- A better understanding of the coordination level from the state, to the county, to the city, not only with the government entities, but also with the VOAD's.
- Given the priority and essential role of VOADs in the recovery of communities, and given the significant amount of ongoing administrative work required to adequately position VOADs for the highest level of success, seek funding for one full time paid VAL (Voluntary Agency Liaison,) and one DVC (Donation Volunteer Coordinator) at the state level to ensure that proper planning, training and coordination occurs in every region.
- A more robust ICS structure in the EOC's from the onset of the disaster.
- Trained EOC liaisons including VOAD liaisons as well as other non-profit liaisons representing their agencies.
- Provide NIMS, ICS & EOC training for non-profit agency personnel so that there is a shared understanding of how incidents are managed (reflected in AAR Waldo Canyon Fire & AAR High Park Fire.)

- MOU's with local government and VOAD agencies outlining response and recovery activities each agency can provide.
- Establish regional Coordinating Groups focused on Volunteer & Donations Management to streamline the coordination of volunteers and donations management in the future (AAR Waldo Canyon / Oct 23, 2012.)
- A single point of contact at the State level representing the activities of the VOAD's.
- Training by the state to each of the regions on donation and volunteer management.
- Ensure the early establishment of a recovery structure is prioritized in future emergency planning efforts, including the pre-establishment of Long Term Recovery Groups.

## ***Threats***

- Obstacles in training due to limited personnel & funding.
- Significant administrative workload to facilitate, coordinate and maintain the appropriate level of preparedness in the voluntary agencies, both VOAD and non-VOAD organizations.
- Losing momentum & interest of voluntary agencies not normally connected with local VOADs.
- Significant reliance on volunteers to staff key positions & functions in the EOC.
- Significant reliance on voluntary organizations (VOADs) and non-governmental (COADs) organizations to provide both short-term and long-term essential services.
- Consistency in personnel both at the local & state government level, but also in leadership with the VOAD's.
- Current, updated response & recovery state & federal regulations and self-sustaining systems to effectively disseminate the information

## ***6.0 Long Term Recovery Groups***

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The Long Term Recovery Group (LTRG) provides long-term aid and resources in the following categories: case management and unmet needs, emotional and spiritual care, housing, material donation coordination and construction and cleanup.

### ***Unmet Needs & Long Term Recovery Groups***

According to FEMA, a successful recovery plan adequately attends to and addresses the unmet needs of individuals and families as they recover from disaster. The term Unmet Needs as a Recovery Support Function refers to individual and family needs that were not met by insurance, governmental assistance, and immediately available emergency assistance from voluntary agencies. Included within this Unmet Needs Recovery Support Function are the subcategories of Long-Term Recovery Groups (LTRG's), Volunteer Coordination, and Donations Management.

Recovery from a disaster is a process that can take years for some survivors. As they begin to rebuild their lives, they may confront disaster-related needs that remain after personal and government-related resources have been exhausted. In these cases, the community itself may be best equipped to assist through the formation of a LTRG. LTRGs often include a combination of government agencies, nonprofit and faith-based partners, businesses, and community-based organizations and serve as a clearinghouse for matching individual or family needs through case management with available local resources & funding. Uses for Long Term Recovery Group funds may include the following:

- Health-related issues
- Repair or replacement of primary homes
- Repair or replacement of personal property
- Loss of livelihood
- Temporary housing needs
- Other compelling needs

Considerations/Assumptions leading to unmet needs can be categorized into three groups:

### ***Immediate disaster related needs***

- Sheltering or short term housing – depending on size, scope & capacity met by local/state & federal government & voluntary agencies.
- Food – Met by local/state & federal government & voluntary agencies
- Clothing – Met by voluntary and faith based agencies
- Health Services – Met by local /state & federal government & voluntary agencies
- Mental Health Services - Met by local/state & federal government & voluntary agencies

The need for a Disaster Recovery Center should be evaluated to provide a one-stop hub for governmental, nonprofit, insurance, and local business community assistance and information. [\(See Annex B – Disaster Recovery Centers\)](#)

### Intermediate disaster related needs

- Housing short term- depending on size, scope & capacity met by local/state & federal government & voluntary agencies
- Employment – Local & state government
- Financial Assistance – Met by voluntary & faith based organizations (LTRG) & FEMA if applicable
- Insurance services – Private sector
- Transition plans – Local government & voluntary agencies

### Long Term disaster related needs

- Long-term mental and behavioral health concerns related to the traumatic incidents of the disaster - met by local/state & federal government & voluntary agencies
- Transportation issues – Local & state government
- Long-term housing – Local, state & federal government
- Comprehensive case management - LTRG
- Children's stability within schools and child care settings – Local government
- Home repairs or insurance deductibles – Private & non-profit sector
- Loss of employment or business – Local, state & federal government
- Legal issues – private & non-profit sector

Case management may be assigned to the LTRG to ensure that affected individuals and family's needs are reviewed.

### **Long Term Recovery Groups – Opportunities**

The biggest challenge facing a community post disaster relating to Unmet Needs & Long Term Recovery is the lack of recovery planning pre-disaster. The greatest successes of the LTRG's come from communities that already know the players. Nonprofits directly supplement and fill gaps where government authority and resources cannot. Resourceful fundraisers, grantors and investors inject needed financial resources to meet recovery needs and obligations that otherwise are not funded by a government program.

Local leaders and emergency management need to encourage and participate in partnership with strong local VOAD's (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster.) The role of VOAD's should be included in EOP's at every level of government.

Honoring donor intent is another significant challenge following a disaster. Determining a fiscal agent to manage financial donations for unmet needs & long term recovery is something that should be considered pre-disaster. The LTRG may seek out an existing not-for-profit agency within the community to serve as its fiscal agent. The following should be in place:

- The fiscal agent has internal safeguards and record protection procedures, as well as the ability to provide regular financial reports to the LTRG.
- The fiscal agent conducts annual external audits.
- It is important that the agent agree to manage the funds at the direction of the LTRG. The funds are

given to and remain the property of the LTRG and not the fiscal agent.

- The LTRG should establish a written Memo of Understanding (MOU) with the fiscal agent.

Alternatively, incorporating and obtaining legal 501(c) 3 status for your LTRG is not terribly complicated, but it does take some time and carries with it obligations for receipting and providing regular financial reporting. Further research and discussion needs to occur regarding the planning for a fiscal agent post disaster. Considerations for choosing an LTRG fiscal agent include researching non-profits in a community that would be interested in taking on this role and identifying them in an EOP. Or perhaps, setting up MOU's ahead of time with potential fiscal agent before disaster strikes.<sup>3</sup>

### *Colorado Long Term Recovery Groups*

The Long Term Recovery Group of Northern Colorado (High Park & Estes Park Fires) formed almost immediately holding their first meeting on July 3, 2012. The LTRGNC is made up of fifty non-profit, government, faith-based, and private organizations. United Way of Larimer County is serving as the fiscal agent for the group.

The Pikes Peak Region Long-Term Recovery Group (Waldo Canyon Fire) also formed immediately calling their first meeting to order on July 5, 2012. This LTRG is made up of approximately thirty non-profits, faith based, community and government organizations. Pikes Peak Community Foundation is the fiscal agent appointed to PPR LTRG. Additionally a 501 C-3 established by the private sector and city administrators of Colorado Springs formed "Colorado Springs Together," a Long Term Recovery Group created to specifically help the residents of Mountain Shadows. The Mountain Shadows neighborhood received 99% of the Waldo Fire devastation and Colorado Springs Together was formed to meet immediate debris and mitigation issues to expedite the rebuilding of the community.

The mission of the Long Term Recovery Group of Northern Colorado and the Pikes Peak Region Long Term Recovery Group is to provide recovery services to individuals and families affected by the fires. FEMA is providing guidance and direction for both groups as they move into their case management phase. Over 600 homes were destroyed in both counties. Another 75 or more homes were damaged to some degree. There were a large number of renters in the Larimer County affected homes. The majority of the homes in El Paso County were individually owned & occupied and insured. With that said, the unmet needs anticipated in Larimer County are much greater than those anticipated in El Paso County.

Both LTRGs are accepting cases for review and moving towards getting financial and resource assistance to those households with unmet needs. The success of both groups stem once again from relationships made before pre-disaster and establishing themselves as LTRGs almost immediately.

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<sup>3</sup> (Excerpts taken from NVOAD LTR Guide 2012)

## ***7.0 Summary***

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The fire season in the summer of 2012 resulted in the most civilian fatalities, caused the most destruction and was the most expensive fire season in Colorado's history. Thursday, June 26th will be remembered as the most destructive day of the most destructive season.

As preparations were being made during the June 26th morning briefing, a "worst case scenario" was described. But, as each agency heard the "worst case" scenario modeling the fire jumping fire lines and threatening the urban interface, most planned in the hopes for a "best case" scenario. This hopeful planning included the Voluntary agencies.

When the "worst case" scenario materialized the afternoon of June 26th, evacuation zones escalated hourly. Response personnel were torn between running to their homes in the evacuation zones, or remaining on as key personnel and responding to the demands of the response. COOP plans were triggered, but the conditions were too fluid to activate them.

The voluntary agencies suddenly found themselves scrambling to open evacuation centers, establish feeding sites, establish people & pet shelters strategic to the evacuation zones, finding sufficient amounts of supplies, finding sufficient amounts of volunteers, and staffing the various EOC's for 24 hour shifts.

No one could have ever imagined that Colorado would be engulfed in multiple simultaneous destructive wildfires. Exercises are often designed to simulate a "worst case" scenario, but true emergency planning is usually scaled down. It is hard to spend time and resources on an event that has a minimal chance of happening when there are more pressing situations that occur daily.

Nonetheless, systems need to be designed to add scalability for disaster planning that are effective for every agency including the VOADs. The role of VOADs should be included in After Action Reports of the state's various local and county Offices of Emergency Management, as VOADs have an extremely important role in every level of the disaster. The VOADs also need to make their plans visible, reviewable and scalable and include continuity of operations plans.

The attached spreadsheet demonstrates the enormous value the non-profit sector plays in the response, relief and recovery phases of a disaster. As demonstrated during the 2012 Colorado Wildfire Season, the non-profits provided millions of dollars in direct and indirect services including personnel, resources and client assistance. As the completion of the recovery phase can take up to several years, the non-profit sector is the only group truly capable to handle the longevity, costs and resources required to bring a community back to its new normal. [\(See Annex A - COVOAD activity Spreadsheet.\)](#)

## Annex A – COVOAD Activity Spreadsheet

Organizations Active in Disaster & Recovery	# Volunteers	Volunteer Hours	Call Center Calls	Shelters Opened	Overnight Stays	Meals & Snacks	Snacks	Drinks	Mobile Feeding & Response Vehicles	Donated Clothing	Donated Household Items	Food & Bev. Collected & distributed	Food Boxes	Donated Pet supplies	Households Assisted	Individuals Assisted	Hygiene Items	Bulk Distribution Items	Tools	
Adventist Community Services LIFT* (Receiving & Distributing donated goods, Indiv. Client assistance, spiritual & emotional care)	1,776	6,010								32,320	190,000	66,246 items		5,642		3,726	27,929		4,031	
American Red Cross (Sheltering, Feeding, Bulk Distribution, Disaster Health & Mental Health, Indiv. Client assistance, Damage Assessment, Community Relations)	699	49,000		19	19,131	14,054	53,000		26	4,281					514		3,000	19,000		
Care & Share Food Bank of Southern Colorado* (Collecting and Distributing donated food & drinks, Bulk distribution)	2,662	8,202										1,354,140 lbs			4,295	14,600				
Catholic Charities of Central Colorado																				
Church World Services																	400			
Colorado 211 United Way (Disaster Call Center, Publishing & updating recovery resource guide)	286	1,262	10,000																	
Discover Goodwill of Southern and Western Colorado* (Collecting & distributing donated goods)	600	1,200													1,700	3,300				
PETAID (Disaster Sheltering & care for large & small animals & pets. Collecting & distributing pet food & supplies)	21	337													450					
Samaritans Purse (Sifting ash & debris removal)	690	9,936																		
Southern Baptists (Feeding, laundry services, shower services, sifting & debris Removal)		6,458																		
The Salvation Army (Fixed & mobile feeding, spiritual & emotional care, individual financial assistance)	1,913	11,596				25,750	12,500	6,000	5					251	208	400	1,289			
Volunteers of America (supporting other voluntary agencies)	4																			
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8,651</b>	<b>94,001</b>	<b>10,000</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>19,131</b>	<b>39,804</b>	<b>65,500</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>36,601</b>	<b>190,000</b>	<b>66,246 Items</b>	<b>1,354,140 lbs</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>6,092</b>	<b>6,717</b>	<b>22,026</b>	<b>32,618</b>	<b>19,000</b>	<b>4,031</b>
<i>In Colorado, the average value of a volunteer is determined to be \$22.03 per hour.</i>		\$ 22.03																		
<b>Financial worth of services provided</b>		<b>\$2,070,842.03</b>																		

\*Some families received items on more than one occasion, which was encouraged

## Annex B – Disaster Recovery Centers

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The Larimer County High Park Fire Disaster Recovery Center (DRC) opened on June 15, 2012 and closed on Friday, July 6, 2012. The DRC received over 1,500 clients with over 600 individual households checking-in and over 250 households visiting the center more than once. Services at the DRC continued to be available through a variety of outlets such as Larimer County offices, the High Park Fire Distribution Center at 215 East Foothills Parkway in Fort Collins, 211, and a variety of community-based organizations and programs.

The DRC had been made possible through a partnership between Larimer County Government Departments, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, Colorado State University, American Red Cross, Salvation Army, North Range Behavioral Health, Loveland Housing Authority and other housing providers, 211 United Way, United States Dept. of Agriculture – Rural Development, Colorado Division of Insurance, Small Business Development Center (SBDC), CSU/Larimer County Extension, and the Medical Reserve Corps of Larimer County.

The El Paso County Waldo Canyon Fire Disaster Recovery Center opened on June 30, 2012 and remains active after moving to the El Paso County Human Services office on July 16, 2012. There have been more than 2000 individuals assisted at the service center.



List of agencies working with the Waldo Canyon Fire DRC: American Red Cross, Pikes Peak Region, Aspen Pointe (Mental Health Services), AT&T, BluSky Restoration, Care and Share (Community Food Bank), Century Link, Colorado Springs Utilities, Colorado Office of Emergency Management (DOLA), Colorado Springs Emergency Management, CSU Extension Service, CRS Temporary Housing, Discover Goodwill of Southern and Western Colorado, El Paso County Veterans Services Office, El Paso County Attorney's Office, El Paso County Public Health, Liberty Mutual Reconstruction Team, North Shore Animal League of America, National Resources Conservation Services, Pikes Peak Association of Realtors, Peak Vista (Community Health), Pikes Peak Regional Building Department, Pikes Peak Workforce Center, SET Health Services, United Way of The Pikes Peak Region.

## *Annex C – Resources*

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Colorado Springs Independent Paper

The Denver Post

Inciweb

COVOAD

Colorado Department of Emergency Management

HelpColoradoNow.org

Wikipedia

NVOAD LTR Guide

FEMA National Recovery Framework

## ***Annex D – Key Points of Contact***

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## **Annex E – Acronyms**

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After Action Report (AAR)  
Adventist Community Services (ACS)  
American Red Cross (AMC)  
Chemical, Biological, Radiological (CBR)  
Centers for Disease Control (CDC)  
Colorado Division of Emergency Management (CDEM)  
Colorado Department of Public Health (CDPHE)  
Colorado Emergency Preparedness Partnership (CEPP)  
Colorado Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (COVOAD)  
Colorado Volunteer Center Network (CVCN)  
Donation Coordination Team/Volunteer Coordination Team (DCT/VCT)  
Department of Homeland Security (DHS)  
Department of Defense (DoD)  
Department of Energy (DOE)  
Disaster Recovery Center (DRC)  
Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA)  
Emergency Operations Center (EOC)  
Emergency Management (EM)  
Frequently Asked Question (FAQ)  
Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)  
Health and Human Services (HHS)  
Interagency Biological Restoration Demonstration (IBRD)  
Incident Commander (IC)  
Incident Command System (ICS)  
Joint Information Center (JIC)  
Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories (LLNL)  
Multi-Agency Coordination (MAC)  
National Disaster Recovery Framework (NDRF)  
National Incident Management System (NIMS)  
Office of Emergency Management (OEM)  
Pacific Northwest National Laboratory (PNNL)  
Point of Contact (POC)  
Recovery Support Function (RSF)  
Small Business Development Center (SBDC)  
Social Media (SM)  
Subject Matter Expert (SME)  
Sandia National Laboratory (SNL)  
Science and Technology (S&T)  
The Salvation Army (TSA)  
Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI)  
United Way of Larimer County 2-1-1 (UWLC 2-1-1)  
Wide Area Recovery & Resiliency Program (WARRP)